

## MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS OF FALSE BAY DIOCESE FROM BISHOP MARGARET

Dear Educators in False Bay Diocese and all those who are sharing in this message,

*Inkosi Mayibe Nani    The Lord be with you    Mag die Here met u wees*

On behalf of the Clergy, Parents and People of the Anglican Diocese of False Bay, we pause for a moment to wish you well as you commence a new year of teaching. We recall that in 2021, schools only reopened in February. We are aware that there is still a rotational system of teaching in place in some areas, but we pray that this too will not last for too much longer.

Our dear Educators, remember that yours is a high calling, a vocation, not just a job. You have responded to a higher power than yourselves who gives you the divine and human power to fulfil your calling. You are teaching children and young people for whom Christ died. Be patient with them, grow their inner vision of themselves and their self-image.

The Covid 19 pandemic has not left anyone untouched. Those eyes looking at you are crying out for recognition that their lives matter. Many have lost family and friends, many come to school hungry and have had to walk long distances because the choice at home is between bread and taxi fare. Some have had to walk the gauntlet of being bullied and taunted along the way. Some dwellings do not have the basic needs of running water and electricity. Human trafficking is a real fear that you please need to make your learners aware of. Joblessness, Inequity and inequality are causing chronic stress which affects both the mental and physical health and well-being of our learners. Educators, you are to be the voice of the voiceless and treat your learners with utmost respect. You are a sign of God's presence in the classroom.

We pray for holy wisdom for Angie Motshekga, our South African Minister of Basic Education. We pray for our School Boards, the Anglican Board of Education, all those responsible for the governance of the school, for the many who hold public roles and portfolios to further education, those responsible for feeding schemes. We give thanks for the positive influence that Archbishop Thabo, our Metropolitan, has on education.

Recently we laid to rest our beloved Emeritus Archbishop Tutu, who touched the lives of many young people, with clarity of mind and skill as a teacher. It is his unwavering faith and spirituality that helped him stay the course. He made children and young people feel that they are valued. When Arch Tutu was not well and people assured him of their prayers, his response would be that 'prayer works'. My sisters and brothers, 'prayer works'. Pray for yourselves and for your learners. Ask God to fill you with love when you feel empty of care and compassion.

As Educators, it is our role to follow in the footsteps of the great teachers who have gone before us, to encourage the next generation to discuss, to dialogue, to debate, to deliberate. We are to shape those in our care as the future leaders. Listen to them to hear what God is saying to us through them in these different days. Sometimes it takes considerable effort to listen but it is required of us to listen. Take what they say to prayer and think things over in God's presence.

And so dear Educators, we advance into the new school year with gratitude, trusting in God's clear purpose for our lives and the lives of our learners. We must make a little progress every day, become a little better every day. Teaching is not a burden, it is not only about imparting knowledge, it is made up of the right kind of relationship with our Creator, with ourselves, our fellow educators and our learners. As you prepare your lessons, pray that God will grant you calmness of mind and steadiness of purpose to do God's will.

You may want to visit our False Bay website for a copy of a 'Back to School' Service. In **An Anglican Prayer Book**, you will find prayers on page 89 for Educational Institutions and Young People. See also the Prayer for the Children of the Church on pg. 84.

For our matriculants who will receive their results this week, we pray for peace, we pray that the anxieties of their mind and hearts will be relaxed. Teacher God, give them hope, courage, calmness, consolation, dignity and a deep sense of your love for them no matter what the outcome is.

For our Schools, Educators, Parents, Care givers and Learners we pray that God will look with mercy upon you, banish all poverty, violence and discord, and make our homes and schools places of peace, unity and safety.

May the hearts of our Educators be filled with joy of being called as Samuel in the Old Testament confidently cherished the mystery of being called by God. Do not shrug off the comforting knowledge that God has called you, that God's presence is with you and will remain with you. The future is exciting and the possibilities of what God is going to be doing through you is limitless. Your vocation is interesting and rich. May the blessings released through your hands cause windows to open in darkened minds. I Samuel 12:16 reads *"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes."*

I leave with you some words from St Paul to the Philippians (Phil 4:8-9), which I pray to the Lord to make true in your lives and mine: *"In conclusion, my brothers and sisters, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honourable ... and the God who gives us peace will be with you."*

Die vrede van God wat alles menslike begrip te bowe gaan, bewaar u harte en gedagtes in die kennis en liefde van God en van sy Seun Jesus Christus onse Here; ithi insikelelo kaThixo ongamandla onke, uYise, uNyana, noMoya oyiNgcwele, ibe phakati kwenu, ihlale nani ngona phakade. Amen.

*"I am, Because we are, Because God is ... Embracing a world shattered by the Covid 19 pandemic."*

Please consider receiving the Covid 19 vaccine and become fully vaccinated.

Love and Blessings,

Bishop Margaret B. Vertue

Bishop of False Bay

18 January 2022